



Myeolchihoe

Sliced Raw Anchovy | 멸치회



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Myeolchi-hoe is a hyper-seasonal delicacy enjoyed during spring and autumn when the Pacific anchovies maximize their lipid reserves. Because anchovies are incredibly fragile and highly susceptible to rapid autolysis (enzymatic self-digestion) and lipid oxidation, this dish requires extreme thermal control and swift mechanical processing. Utilizing an osmotic ice-salt bath or a traditional acidic makgeolli wash forces the delicate myofibrils to contract, physically firming the flesh while chemically neutralizing the fishy trimethylamine (TMA) molecules for a rich, buttery, and melt-in-your-mouth experience.

 **Total:** 20 mins | **Prep:** 20 mins | **Cook:** 0 mins (Raw) |  **Difficulty:** High (Requires impeccable freshness and delicate handling) |  **Profile:** Richly Buttery, Nutty, and Savory |  **Focus:** Omega-3 Fatty Acids (EPA/DHA) & TMA Control

Ingredients (2 servings)

- **Main Ingredients:** 300g ultra-fresh, sashimi-grade whole raw anchovies (must be caught the same day), 10 lettuce & perilla leaves, 2 green chilies, 3 cloves garlic
- **Osmotic Wash Solution (Optional but highly recommended):** 3 cups ice water + 1 tbsp coarse salt (or 1 cup cold unpasteurized Makgeolli / Korean rice wine)
- **Accompaniment Sauce (Cho-gochujang):** 2 tbsp gochujang, 2 tbsp vinegar, 1 tbsp sugar (or agave syrup), 0.5 tbsp minced garlic, 0.5 tbsp sesame oil, a pinch of sesame seeds

Allergy Information Contains: Fish (Anchovy), Soy, Wheat (from gochujang)

Equipment Small Paring Knife (or precise fingers), Ice Bath Bowl, Strainer, Absorbent Food-grade Paper (Haedongji) or Clean Cloth

Cooking Instructions

1. **Thermal Blockade & Sanitation:** The enzymes and lipids in anchovies begin to degrade the moment they touch the warmth of human hands (36.5°C). Chill your hands in ice water beforehand and ensure all equipment is cooled near the freezing point.
2. **Structural Evisceration (Butterfly Technique):** Gently snap the head of the anchovy backward and carefully pull it toward the tail; the viscera and the delicate spine will slide out in one intact piece. (Using your fingertips to gently butterfly the flesh is often superior to a knife, which can crush the fragile muscle fibers.)

3. **Chemical Wash & Thermal Shock:** Quickly agitate the butterflied fillets in the ice-cold salt water (or cold makgeolli) for just 10–20 seconds. This osmotic shock forces the muscle fibers to rapidly contract, firming the texture, while washing away residual blood and volatile TMA compounds.
4. **Absolute Moisture Extraction:** Drain the anchovies in a strainer, then lay them out on absorbent food-grade paper. Press very gently to extract 100% of the surface moisture. Any remaining water acts as a vector for enzymatic degradation, turning the flesh to mush.
5. **Plating & Aromatic Masking:** Arrange the chilled anchovy fillets on a cold plate. Serve with thinly sliced garlic, chilies, ssam greens, and the highly acidic cho-gochujang. The sharp acetic acid in the sauce perfectly neutralizes the overwhelming richness of the anchovy lipids.

Professional Culinary Tips

- **Mechanics of Autolysis:** Anchovies possess hyper-active digestive enzymes in their viscera. Upon death, these enzymes begin to digest the fish's own belly. Even with same-day catch, immediate mechanical removal of the guts and bloodline is the absolute priority to save the structural integrity of the flesh.
- **Physicochemistry of the Makgeolli Wash:** The southern Korean tradition of washing raw anchovies in makgeolli (rice wine) is scientifically profound. The organic acids in the wine chemically bind to TMA (the fishy odor molecule), turning it into a non-volatile salt. Simultaneously, the alcohol provides mild sterilization and slightly denatures surface proteins, providing much-needed mechanical tension to the fragile fillets.
- **Lipid-Acid Synergy:** Spring and autumn anchovies are packed with polyunsaturated fats (EPA/DHA) for spawning and overwintering. While this provides a luxurious, buttery texture, it can quickly exhaust the palate. Pairing them with cho-gochujang utilizes acetic acid to strip the lipid coating from the tongue, maximizing the umami experience with every bite.

Nutrition Facts (Estimated)

Total Content : Approx. 150g (1 serving, fish only)

Calories : 185 kcal

– Sodium : 150mg

– Total Carbohydrate : 0.0g

– Sugar : 0.0g

– Total Fat : 8.5g

– Saturated Fat : 2.0g

– Unsaturated Fat : 6.5g

– Cholesterol : 85.0mg

– Protein : 27.0g

– Calcium : 220.0mg

*Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet and standard Korean nutritional reference values

**Nutritional values are calculated based on original ingredients; substitutions may alter specific macronutrients.

The Silver Gleam of Coastal Tides: A Lyrical Masterpiece of Melt-in-the-Mouth Raw Anchovy Delicacy

Myeolchi-hoe (Raw Anchovy Sashimi) stands as the singular, ephemeral pinnacle of Korean seasonal coastal gastronomy, harvested during the peak spring and autumn tides in the pristine waters of the southern coast. Eschewing the stereotype of anchovies as merely dried pantry staples, fresh raw anchovies—meticulously stripped of their heads and viscera instantly upon catch due to their extreme perishability—offer a velvety, melt-in-the-mouth tenderness and a rich, sesame-like nutty umami that captivates the palate.

Arranged over crushed ice and served alongside zesty chogochujang, fresh garlic, and crisp garden greens, each translucent silver morsel delivers an extraordinary sensory experience. The moment it touches the tongue, the delicate flesh dissolves effortlessly into a torrent of savory marine richness, offering an intimate communion with the brisk, fleeting bounty of the coastal waters.

True gastronomy does not rely on elaborate aging; it flourishes in the ancestral wisdom of capturing ingredients at their absolute peak of ephemeral freshness and restoring internal vitality through nature's seasonal rhythms. Savoring a pristine plate of fresh raw anchovy sashimi today is an elegant and sacred ritual—clearing away the rush of modern life and filling the spirit with unpretentious warmth, seasonal gratitude, and timeless coastal solace.

Editor's Review

1. An Exhilarating Cadence of Velvety Melt-in-the-Mouth Tenderness and Rich, Nutty Umami

The moment a delicate sliver of fresh raw anchovy—dipped lightly in tangy chogochujang—touches the palate, an immediate wave of velvety softness envelops the senses, dissolving effortlessly without a trace of toughness. This buttery, nut-like umami is swiftly balanced by the sharp kick of garlic and the refreshing crunch of fresh vegetables, orchestrating an endlessly refreshing, multi-layered sensory thrill.

2. Rapid Perishability Control Kinetics and High-Density Omega-3/Calcium Bioavailability

Myeolchi-hoe represents an exacting study in marine food physics and temporal freshness management. Because fresh anchovies spoil rapidly outside of water, the immediate removal of heads and viscera halts enzymatic breakdown and locks in pristine cellular moisture. Concurrently, seasonal fresh anchovies concentrate exceptionally high levels of polyunsaturated fatty acids (omega-3s, EPA, DHA), bioavailable calcium, and fatigue-banishing taurine, establishing an optimal nutritional matrix for cardiovascular wellness and systemic recovery.

3. The Southern Coastal Port Nostalgia and the Grounding Sanctuary of Seasonal Harvest

Found gracing the coastal ports of the southern provinces during the brisk spring and autumn seasons as a prized regional delicacy, a modest plate of raw anchovy sashimi serves as an enduring emotional haven against daily weariness. Revered for generations as an essential seasonal restorative to awaken the appetite and warm the core, enjoying this honest, highly perishable treasure washes away modern stress, granting a timeless sanctuary of stillness, coastal heritage, and grounded culinary happiness.

